

Facilitating transnational collaborative learning through Virtual Exchange

Kristina Förster (JMU) & Aysel Saricaoglu (ASBU)
16 June 2021 GoTEd-Week



👤 Kristina Foerster • 1m

Where in the world are you?

Please click on "+" and enter the name of your city.



Ice-Breaker: “The Identity Exercise”

**Please get something
to write ...**



Step 1:

**Write down 7 words
that describe you as a
person precisely as
possible.**

Feel free to use:

- nouns
- adjectives
- verbs



Step 2:

**Now you need to
cross out 2 terms...**

Decide yourself, you
may keep **5 aspects** of
your identity on your list.



Step 3:

**Next, you need to
cross out 2 more
words ...**

You should now be left
with **3 words** on your
list.



Reflection Round in Break-Out-Rooms (15 mins)



- 1) Which of the terms remained on your list? Why?
- 2) Which ones did you cross out? Why?
- 3) What do you think this exercise has to do with intercultural collaboration?

Please share your thoughts related to these questions on this padlet:

https://padlet.com/kristina_foerster3/1dkgiyinjbaodhpn

What is Virtual Exchange (VE)?

- ❖ An umbrella term referring to engaging classes in online intercultural collaboration projects with international partners (also referred to as “Collaborative Online International Learning” or “Global Virtual Teams” or “Intercultural Telecollaboration”)
- ❖ Key features:
 - Online/Virtual
 - International
 - Extended periods of time
 - An integrated part of coursework
 - Guidance of educators and/or expert facilitators
- ❖ Good because
 - First-hand online learning experiences
 - A way to develop students’ intercultural competence



What VE is not...

- MOOCs
- Virtual mobility
- Distance learning courses
- Informal social media interactions
- Unmoderated, unsustained, unstructured communication

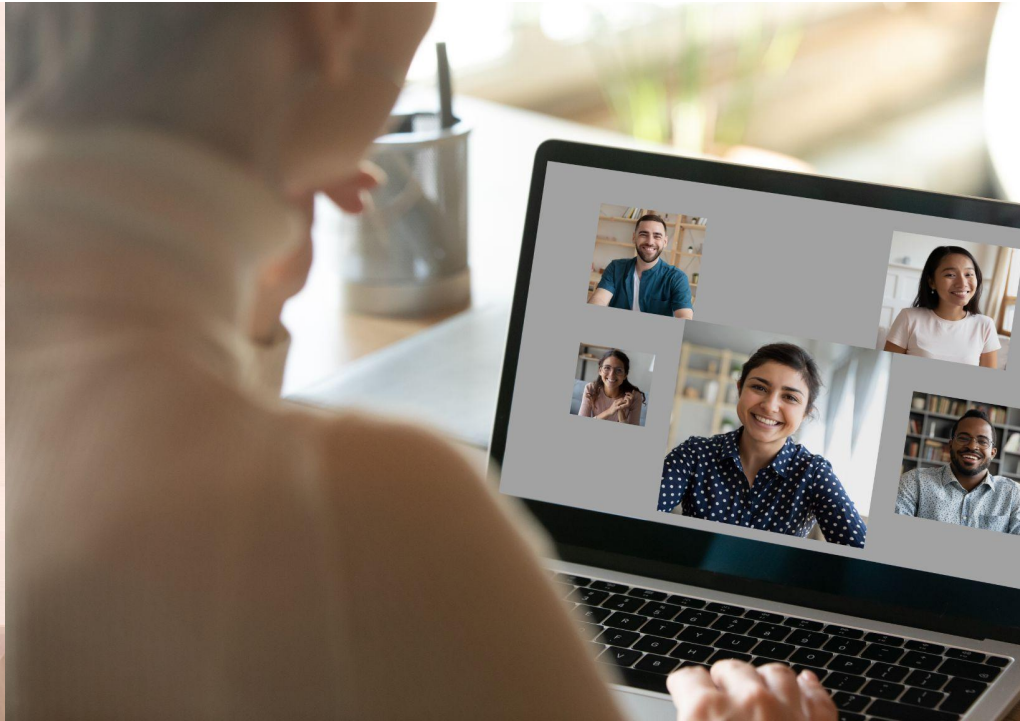


Recent developments in European Higher Education

- **EVALUATE Project** (2017-19): Large Scale VE Implementation & Evaluation in Teacher Education:
<https://sites.google.com/unileon.es/evaluate2019/>
- **EVOLVE Project** (2018-20): Mainstreaming of VE in Higher Education:
<https://evolve-erasmus.eu/>
- **ERASMUS+ Virtual Exchange** (2018-20): Integration of different VE approaches as a complement to physical Erasmus+ mobility: https://europa.eu/youth/erasmusvirtual/objectives_en



Project Based “vs” Dialogue Based VEs



Reflection Round in Break-Out-Rooms (15 mins)



- How would you define dialogue? What makes dialogue different from e.g. a discussion or a debate?
- What attitudes and skills are important when participating in a dialogue?
- Do you integrate dialogue into your teaching? What can/could students in your subject area learn through dialogue?

Please share your thoughts here:

https://padlet.com/kristina_foerster3/afslupvz5j5ggwap

VE in Teacher Education

Classrooms of tomorrow:

- culturally diverse contexts
- interdisciplinary
- technology-centered

Today's limited educational opportunities (European Commission, 2015a):

- Only a small number of teachers are confident using technology in the classroom
- Only a small number of students participate in international mobility programmes such as Erasmus+

The need:

- New ways to prepare students for the challenges of the future



(The EVALUATE Group, 2019)

The Process of VE in Teacher Education

- Teacher trainers from different countries come into contact.
- They develop **joint tasks** which will be integrated into their respective courses.
- Students **work together online**, **discuss issues** related to the tasks and collaborate to **create educational materials and activities**.
- Teacher trainers guide students in their online interactions and in their reflections on this experience.
- Students submit portfolios, essays, or make presentations about their collaboration with their international partners.
- Students receive academic credit for their work.



Kristina Foerster @KristinaFoerst5 · Mar 4

My first seminar for preservice teachers on [#VirtualExchange @Uni_WUE](#) should of course also include a Virtual Exchange. Fingers crossed that I'll find a partner with the help of [@UNICollaborate](#).



UNICollaboration @UNICollaborate · Mar 4

Updated Virtual Exchange Proposal: Intercultural Dimensions of Teaching and Learning with Digital Media
unicollaboration.org/index.php/exch.... Excerpt: In the upcoming summer semeste



Kristina Foerster @KristinaFoerst5 · Apr 2

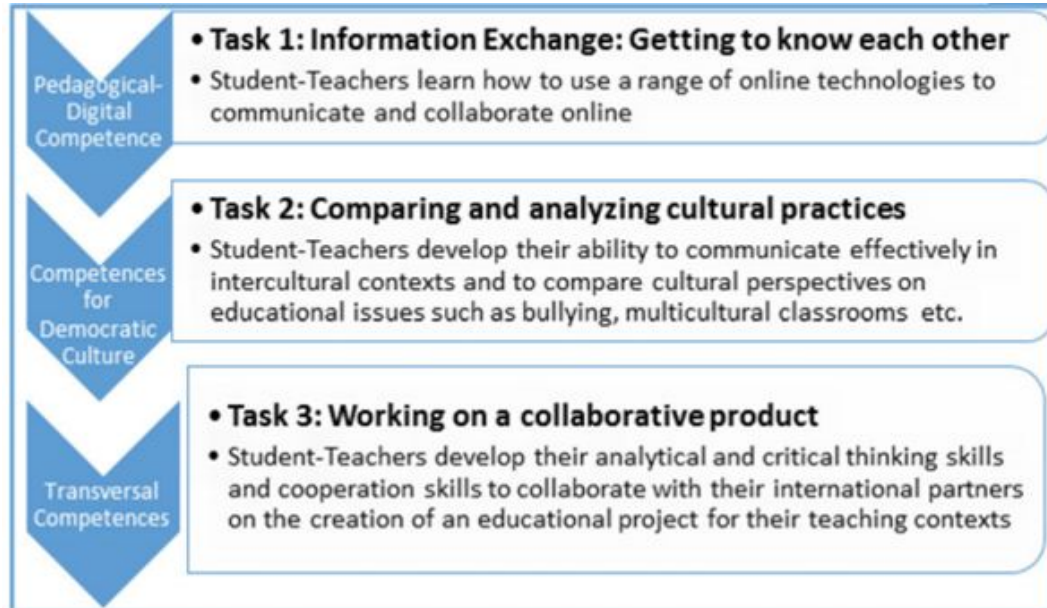
Collaboratively designing a [#virtualexchange](#) is a great learning opportunity, too. I'm definitely benefitting from [@AyselSaricaoğlu](#)'s experience in facilitating PBL through VE. Also, the recent [@evolve_erasmus](#) report focusing on teachers is very interesting in this regard.



Aysel Saricaoğlu @AyselSaricaoğlu · Apr 1

So excited about the virtual exchange that [@KristinaFoerst5](#) and I are designing for our students this semester! One key feature of successful telecollaboration is effective collaboration between the two teachers prior to implementation! 🙌

Task-based / Project-Based VE



Project-based learning (PBL):

engaging students in

- learning knowledge and skills through a structured process including questions, tasks, and products
- contextualizing learning by problem solving or product developing activities
- integrating language, content, and skills
- enhancing collaboration among students
- encouraging reflections on both the learning process and product

(Beckett & Slater, 2005; Buck Institute of Education, 2003; Moss & Van Duzer, 1998)

Figure 4. The progressive exchange telecollaborative model for initial teacher education (Müller-Hartmann, O'Dowd, and colleagues from the EVALUATE Group, 2017, p. 9; O'Dowd, 2017, p. 40)

VE Practices in Teacher Education

Dooly (2011): Spain-USA

- (a) **giving feedback** on the individual teaching units in the working groups
- (b) **collaboratively developing a podcast/vodcast activity** that could be used in a face-to-face teaching situation

Saricaoglu & Geluso (2020): Turkey-USA

- (a) **discussing questions** related to first/second language acquisition
- (b) **performing a linguistic analysis** of real language data (transcripts of conversations between a caregiver and a child / texts written by L2 learners)
- (c) submitting **written reports**

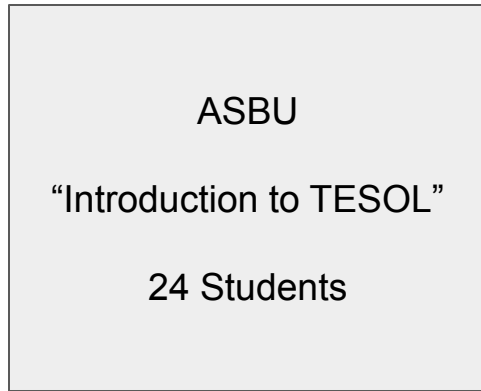
Wach, Zhang & Nichols-Besel (2021): USA-Poland-China

- (a) USA students **providing grammar instruction** to NNSs (students from Poland and China) through asynchronous computer-mediated communication (e-mails)

How did it work for us?



Our VE at a Glance



8 transnational teams & project portfolios

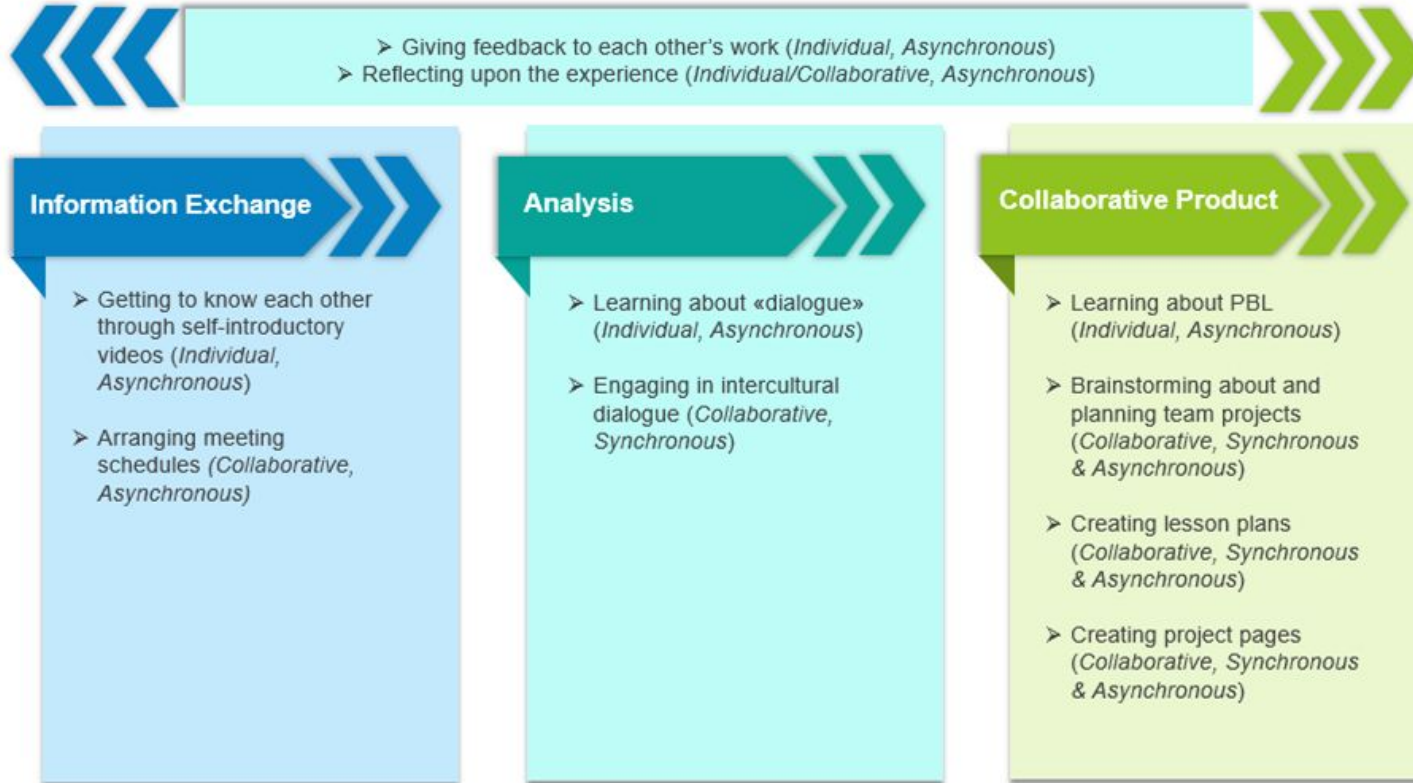


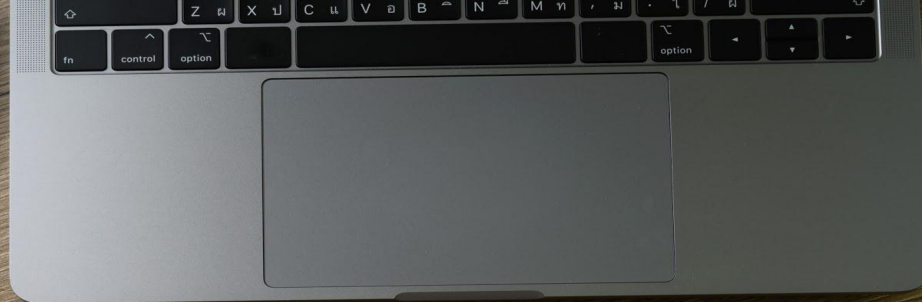
Our VE Goals

- Increased intercultural competence
- Increased collaborative learning skills
- Increased skills in educational technologies and digital resources
 - Ability to apply the principles of intercultural dialogue into the VE processes
 - Ability to apply the principles of project-based learning into the VE processes
 - Ability to create effective lesson plans with an interdisciplinary perspective
 - Ability to create effective project pages documenting all the VE processes and products



Our Task Sequence





The Teachers' Role in VE



FACILITATING





Teachers running VEs must be prepared to **help their students navigate complex communicative situations** (O'Dowd, Sauro & Spector-Cohen 2020)



[T]eachers require keenly refined intercultural skills and attitudes in order to be able to **collaborate with their colleagues** and to **coordinate the exchange** in a manner which is beneficial to all parties. (O'Dowd 2015)



[Teachers need] to **sensitise their learners** to the cultural and institutional differences which may lead to misunderstandings and the formation of stereotypes. (Belz 2003)



[Teachers] must be able to not only **design effective telecollaborative** tasks, but be able to **monitor and assess** the learner interaction (Dooly 2010)

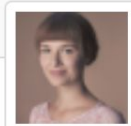


VE serves as a form of **experiential learning** not only for the students but also **for their teachers**, for whom adopting this practice is an important learning curve (Nissen & Kurek 2020)

Creating a Learning Environment for VE



Kristina Förster



My groups:

ASBU & JMU Virtual Exchange: Plenary Group

(Administrator)

ASBU & JMU Virtual Exchange: Team 1

(Administrator)

ASBU & JMU Virtual Exchange: Team 2

(Administrator)

ASBU & JMU Virtual Exchange: Team 3

(Administrator)

ASBU & JMU Virtual Exchange: Team 4

(Administrator)

ASBU & JMU Virtual Exchange: Team 5

(Administrator)

ASBU & JMU Virtual Exchange: Team 6

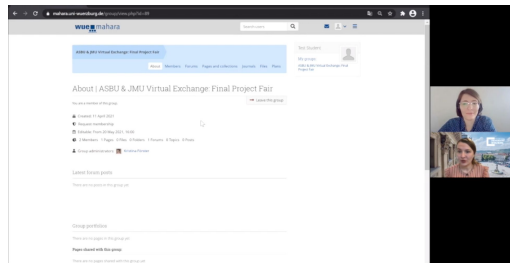
(Administrator)

ASBU & JMU Virtual Exchange: Team 7

(Administrator)

ASBU & JMU Virtual Exchange: Team 8

(Administrator)



<https://video.uni-wuerzburg.de/iframe/?securecode=ecb88a381a3cf098c76b955>



Student Handbook: ASBU & JMU Virtual Exchange

29 April - 27 May 2021

Table of Contents

- [Welcome to our Virtual Exchange!](#)
- [Intended Learning Outcomes](#)
- [Teachers' Office Hours & Contact](#)
- [Meet Kristina Förster](#)
- [Teams](#)
- [Week-by-Week Activities at a Glance](#)
- [Online Socialisation](#)
- [Week 1: Intercultural dialogue](#)
- [Week 2: Start your team project](#)
- [Week 3: Develop your lesson plan](#)
- [Week 4: Finalize your project](#)
- [Week 5: Share your projects with peers](#)
- [Your Digital Infrastructure](#)
- [Synchronous Meetings](#)
- [Asynchronous Collaboration](#)
- [Recording and Sharing a Video](#)



Week-by-Week Activities Checklist

Week	Weekly Focus	What will you do?
Pre-VE: 23.-28.04.2021	Online Socialisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the pre-VE survey <input type="checkbox"/> Set up your Mahara Space <input type="checkbox"/> Upload an introduction video to Mahara <input type="checkbox"/> Comment on your team members' videos <input type="checkbox"/> Decide when you'll have your weekly ZOOM meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Optional: Write your first journal entry
29.04. - 05.05.2021	Online (Intercultural) Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn about dialogue <input type="checkbox"/> Meet your team in ZOOM <input type="checkbox"/> Engage in online intercultural dialogue <input type="checkbox"/> Write a journal entry about your experience
06.05. - 12.05.2021	Starting your team project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn about Project Based Learning (PBL) <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss your project in your Mahara forum <input type="checkbox"/> Plan your project in ZOOM <input type="checkbox"/> Create a group page in Mahara to showcase your ideas
Please note: Thursday 13 May is a public holiday in Germany.		
14.05. - 19.05.2021	Develop your team project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review your group feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Decide how to document your lesson plan <input type="checkbox"/> Reflect upon your group process and your learning so far <input type="checkbox"/> Write a journal entry about your experience
20.05.2021 - 26.05.2021	Finalize your presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn about portfolio presentations in Mahara <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss how you want to present your results <input type="checkbox"/> Create and/or enhance portfolio artefacts <input type="checkbox"/> Create your project page in the Plenary group
27.05.2021 - 02.06.2021	Share your projects with peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visit the "Final Project Fair" <input type="checkbox"/> Have a look at the other teams' projects <input type="checkbox"/> Give & receive feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Say Goodbye! <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Post-Survey

https://docs.google.com/document/d/146bMs-d6YjUC4YU8BFUWWSryXkFSQ_vS2ByIR6IA52Y/edit?usp=sharing

Pages and collections | ASBU & JMU Virtual Exchange: Plenary Group

Search: *(Title, description, tags)* Sort by: + Add Copy

 Last modified Search

Your weekly tasks an...

Every Thursday, Aysel and Kristina will share a page with everything you'll need for the coming week, e.g. texts you s...

🔒 7 📄 ⋮



Teaching Portfolio

Group homepage

The group homepage contains the content that appears on the "About" tab for this group

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Final Project Fair

Welcome to the ASBU & JMU Final Project Fair!!!
Over the course of four weeks, students taking a TESOL course offere...

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Collaborative Results Portfolio

Our Students' Thoughts on Mahara...



Challenges we faced



WE LIKED
YOUR IDEA



YOU SHOULD
USE MAHARA




Our Assessment

Both **process** and **product feedback**:

- Feedback on the project plans
- Feedback on the collaboratively created lesson plans
- Feedback on the project pages



Our Assessment: Feedback on the project pages

8-10 	<p>Your project page is very well organized and follows a clear structure. The content is relevant and well- presented. You considered your audience's perspective very well when presenting your project. Your choice of digital tools and modes of communication (written, audiovisual, visual) conveys your messages very well. You have shown that you worked together as a team and that everybody participated very actively in the Virtual Exchange project. Your team completed all the tasks. You have also reflected about what you learned during the Virtual Exchange and from interacting with your partners.</p>
6-7	<p>Your project page is quite well organized and follows a clear structure. The content is relevant and well- presented. You also considered your audience when designing your page. You used different digital tools and modes of communication (written, audiovisual, visual) to convey your message. Your team has shown that you have participated actively in the Virtual Exchange project. You completed all your tasks. To some extent you have reflected about what you learned from the Virtual Exchange and from interacting in your team.</p>
5-6	<p>Your project page is quite well organized although it could have been presented in a better way. The content is mostly relevant. Most of the members of your team participated in the Virtual Exchange project. You completed most of your tasks. You didn't use many tools and modes of communication (written, audiovisual, visual) to present your project. You didn't show how you reflected about what you learned from the Virtual Exchange and from interacting with your partners.</p>
1-4	<p>Your project page is not well organized. Your team did not complete a Virtual exchange project. You did not complete your tasks. You didn't actively work with your digital infrastructure. You didn't show how you reflected about what you learned from the Virtual Exchange and from interacting in your team.</p>

The rubric is based on the VE portfolio of **Robert O'Dowd et al. (since 2019)** but has been adapted for our purposes with kind permission.

Our Assessment: Feedback on the lesson plans

Criteria	Proficient	Satisfactory	Emerging	Unsatisfactory
Focus	The focus is clearly stated and explained ✓	The focus is stated and explained	The focus is stated, but not explained	Vague focus or lack of focus
Objectives	Includes observable and measurable, clearly stated objectives that are effectively aligned with learning activities and outcomes	Includes observable and measurable objectives that are aligned with learning activities and outcomes	Includes somewhat observable and measurable objectives, but needs support to be aligned with learning activities and outcomes ✓	Does not identify any objectives
Procedures & Activities	Effectively plans a variety of instructional activities aligned with learning objectives for individual and groups of students	Plans instructional activities aligned with learning objectives for individual and groups of students	Plans instructional activities, but needs support to be aligned with learning objectives ✓	Instructional activities are missing or incomplete
Assessment	Effectively utilizes a variety of clear assessment strategies aligned with learning objectives	Utilizes clear assessment strategies aligned with learning objectives ✓	Utilizes assessment strategies limited in type and poorly aligned with learning objectives	Does not utilize any assessment strategies
Resources & Materials	Effectively integrates a variety of creative and authentic materials, resources and technologies ✓	Integrates appropriate materials, resources and technologies	Integrates materials, resources and technologies some of which are inappropriate for the learners and the content	Integrates limited or inappropriate materials, resources and technologies or does not integrate any
Organization & Quality	Well-planned, sequential, detailed, step-by-step, clear organization	Organized and sequential with step-by-step details ✓	Some organization, but needs to be supported with details	Minimal or no organization

Our Assessment: Feedback on the lesson plans

Comments

Dear Team 1,

Thank you for this wonderful lesson plan! We have enjoyed reading your interesting ideas and fun activities. Here are some insights from us that, we hope, might be helpful in your future teaching:

- “Never Have I Ever” is certainly a fun activity, but “inversion” and Present Perfect tense might be grammatically challenging for 5th grades. We need to make sure we are not confusing the students linguistically. Maybe a brief introduction to the structure or a brief explanation before the ice-breaker? Or another ice-breaker with lower-level language demands? Linguistically, “Imagine you want to welcome a guest and she/he just knocks on your door, how would you greet him?” might also be a little demanding for the students.
- We can turn the lesson objectives into more observable and measurable learner behaviours. For example,
 - * to demonstrate expanded knowledge about other cultures
 - * to demonstrate skills in handling conflicts arising from intercultural differences
 - * to demonstrate an understanding of the fact that being different does not mean being worse or better
- We can be more specific and detailed in describing the activities. For example, the “Never Have I Ever” ice-breaker also gives the reader the impression that the teacher starts the statement, but a different student completes it each time. Not true, right? :)
- Let’s think if we can find videos which are more similar in length and content and which may be more attractive for young learners? Turkey and Italy videos are around 3 minutes, Germany video is around 4 minutes, but the USA video is more than 8 minutes. SO, only the videos last for 18 minutes, which shows that we cannot really finish this activity in 10-15 minutes as planned. :) This following one is long too, but might work better for our young audience:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxFxnZgOGG4>
- The two objectives that this lesson plan can certainly achieve by the end of the lesson are “students’ expanded knowledge about other cultures and countries” and “ability to share knowledge about own culture via creative products.” Let’s ask ourselves which activities are aligned with the other two objectives related to handling intercultural conflicts and respecting each other? Because we do not have activities aligned with these objectives, I do not think that we can revise them. We can either revise the activities, or just delete the objectives which cannot be achieved by the end of this lesson via the implemented activities.

Students' Perspectives



Hi everybody!

I am Jasmin. A 4th semester student at the JMU Würzburg and I am studying to become a gymnasium teacher for the subjects English and Biology.

As mentioned, I was part of the virtual exchange between Ancera and Würzburg. So I had the chance to be part of this interesting program. In the past years I already had the opportunity to go on exchanges in person, so it was an even more interesting experience for me to go on an online exchange. In the following, I would like to give you a short overview over my personal experiences I made during the virtual exchange.

At the beginning we were sorted into groups of 5, which I think was generally a good group size. Our first task was to upload an introduction video of ourselves on Mahara. This was already a quite interesting start because the majority of our group didn't manage to upload the videos on the Mahara platform. Despite the view videos we had already seen, everybody introduced themselves again in our first online meeting.

What I really liked about our group, was that everybody was very communicative from the start and wanted to share their personal views and experiences. In our first meeting we talked a lot about prejudices of the other country, personal experiences and stuff we really liked and found interesting, as well as important in life. That way we grew already from the start quite close as a group and stayed longer in the meeting even after the task for the week was already completed.

During those first talks we also found out that we are all cat lovers, so we kinda joked about being the cat-lover-group, which brought us even closer together. Because we found something that we all have in common, which I think was very crucial for our group dynamic.

What I found really interesting about the online exchange was the different opinions we gathered about topics and the following discussions and reflections that resulted out of it. That way I felt like we deepened our understanding of our studies and gained also a understanding for intercultural and trans-cultural learning experiences.

I personally think that an online exchange is giving everybody the chance, despite of money, time, physical mobility and social aspects to be part of such experiences.

In my group we had one girl, who never had her camera on. In our first meeting she said, that she generally has a hard time opening up to new people and new situations and that she feels insecure, which was the reason why her camera was turned off. Because this would give her some save-space and she would feel more comfortable sharing her own opinions. At the end she told us that she was very grateful for the experience and the opportunity to be part of our group and the exchange. I think this shows that even if one needs their save-space, to for example not feel insecure, an online exchange can provide that probably easier than one in person.

She was actually also the one who created our group memes, which I would like to show you in the following.

As a conclusion, I see a lot of opportunities and of course technical challenges in an online exchange, but all the positive you can gain out of it, makes it in my opinion totally worth it.

Well then all that's left to say for me is: Thank you for your attention!
If you have any questions let me know.





**WHEN THE WHOLE TEAM STARTS
THANKING EACH OTHER**

Outlook: How to get in touch with the VE-Community?

✉ info@unicollaboration.org

📌 [Cross-Disciplinary Organisation for Telecollaboration and Virtual Exchange in Higher Education](#)

UNICollaboration 



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A group photo of approximately 15 diverse individuals, including men and women of various ethnicities, standing in front of a building with large windows. They are dressed in professional or semi-professional attire.

- General info
- Finding a Virtual Exchange Partner
- VE and Telecollaboration Bibliography
- Tasks >
- Sample projects
- Position Papers

UNICollaboration: <https://www.unicollaboration.org/>

Opening a Global Conversation: Building Trust in Digital Communities

Tuesday, 22 June (6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. CET)



Teacher educators, teachers
& students are welcome to
join:



<https://mediaeducationlab.com/opening-global-conversation>

This program is a collaboration between the Media Education Lab (University of Rhode Island, USA) and the Media Education & Educational Technology Lab (University of Würzburg, Germany).

Closing Poll with Mentimeter

Go to www.menti.com and use the code 9154 3402

Your biggest learning in 3 words?

 Mentimeter

Let's hear your questions!



For further
questions...

kristina.foerster@uni-wuerzburg.de
&
aysel.saricaogluaygan@asbu.edu.tr



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